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S E C R E T JUNE 21.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izenberg DATE 10/2/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON (3)
EXCISE EXEMPTIONS ☐
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RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

REF : DEPTEL 883; EMBTEL 5442; TOUSI 2006

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

LIMDIS

1. AS REPORTED IN TOUSI 2006 MISSION IS IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH GVN ON QUESTION OF INTENSIVE PSYWAR EFFORT FOCUSING ON UPCOMING ELECTIONS. VIVN HAS ALREADY BEGUN CAMPAIGN TO EXPLAIN ELECTION PROCEDURES AND HAS REQUESTED OUR ASSISTANCE. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION IS PREPARING SIMILAR CAMPAIGN ONCE ELECTORAL LAW ISSUED. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WORKING

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 2503A S E C R E T
UNDER GUIDANCE OF MINISTRY INTERIOR, CAN BE COUNTED UPON PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN TURNING OUT VOTE A TASK WHICH THEY HAVE HANDLED WELL ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, MOST RECENTLY WITH MAY 1965 COUNCIL ELECTIONS. WE WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ALL INTERESTED MINISTRIES ON THIS QUESTION AND WILL ALSO CHECK ON EFFICACY OF THEIR WORK BY TAKING SOUNDINGS IN PROVINCES.

(2)

2. (A) WITH RESPECT TO SUGGESTION CONTAINED PARA 4 OF DEPTEL, MISSION HAS CONSIDERED CAREFULLY QUESTION OF ENLISTING YOUTH TO ASSIST WITH ELECTIONS. MATTER HAS BEEN DISCUSSED BOTH BY MISSION WORKING COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS AND MISSION YOUTH COMMITTEE. ALTHOUGH APPRECIATING POSSIBLE BENEFITS FOR YOUTH WHO ABLE PLAY ROLE IN ELECTIONS, BOTH COMMITTEES CAME TO CONCLUSION THAT RISKS OF DISRUPTING ORDERLY, NON-POLITICAL ELECTORAL PROCESS ARE TOO GREAT. MISSION BELIEVES BOTH USG AND GVN INTERESTS WOULD BE BETTER SERVED BY ADHERING TO PROCEDURES ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN ELECTORAL LAW FOR OBSERVING ELECTIONS, SUPPLEMENTED BY FOREIGN PRESS, DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND ANY OTHER TYPE OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION WHICH MAY DEVELOP. PRESENTLY EXISTING GVN PUBLIC INFORMATION CAPABILITIES FOR VOTER EDUCATION OUTLINED ABOVE ARE CONSIDERED ADEQUATE.

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PAGE 3 RUMJIR 2503A S E C R E T

(B) AS REPORTED IN EMBTEL 5442 POLITICALLY ACTIVE STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL HAVE EVOLVED INTO THREE GENERAL GROUPS, EACH OF WHICH IS PLAYING HIGHLY PARTISAN POLITICAL ROLE. THERE IS LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF THEM AGREEING TO PUT ASIDE STRONGLY HELD POLITICAL BELIEFS AND TIES TO NATIONAL POLITICAL GROUPS, (INCLUDING PUBLICLY-AMENDED POSITIONS FOR OR AGAINST ELECTIONS) IN ORDER TO WORK TOGETHER IN SOME SORT OF YOUTH ELECTION CORPS. SHOULD THEY AGREE TO SERVE IN SUCH CAPACITY WE DOUBT SERIOUSLY WHETHER THEY COULD BE RELIED UPON TO UNDERTAKE EFFORT IN NON-PARTISAN FASHION. THOSE UNIVERSITY-LEVEL YOUTH WHO HAVE NOT COMMITTED SELVES POLITICALLY DURING "STRUGGLE" AND HAVE NECESSARY INTEREST AND ABILITY HELP WITH ELECTIONS ARE ALMOST ALL ALREADY ENGAGED IN SOME FORM OF SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WHICH WILL CONTINUE PAST ELECTION DAY (E.G. SUMMER ACTIVITIES PROGRAM, DISTRICT EIGHT, NATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE). WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE MISTAKE TO DIVERT THEM INTO ELECTION PROCESS.

3. ON SUBJECT OF ELECTION CEASEFIRE, WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT VIET CONG WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SUCH PROPOSITION SINCE ALL OF THEIR PROPAGANDA HAS DENOUNCED ELECTIONS. POLITICAL EFFECT ON OUR DECLARING CEASEFIRE FOR ELECTION DAY WOULD PRESUMABLY BE

PAGE 4 RUMJIR 2503A S E C R E T
TO DIMINISH RATHER THAN INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT BECAUSE POPULATION LIVING IN INSECURE AREAS WOULD BE MORE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT ABILITY GVN PROTECT THEM FROM VIET CONG INTIMIDATION. WHILE THERE MIGHT BE ADVANTAGES IN CEASEFIRE IF IT WERE TO BE RESPECTED BY BOTH SIDES, MAKING PUBLIC PROPOSAL FOR CEASEFIRE, KNOWING IT WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED, WOULD NOT, IN OUR OPINION, YIELD POSITIVE RESULTS. AS THINGS WILL WORK OUT, A DE FACTO CEASEFIRE AS FAR AS ARVN TROOPS ARE CONCERNED MAY WELL RESULT FROM MILITARY UNITS BEING ENGAGED IN VOTING ON ELECTION DAY. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WELL TO KEEP POSSIBILITY IN MIND AND TAKE ANOTHER READING A WEEK OR TWO BEFORE ELECTION DAY. VC INTENTIONS WILL BE BETTER KNOWN BY THEN, AND THE PROGRESS OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNING WILL GIVE US A BETTER READING ON VOTER ATTITUDES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

GP-3. LODGE

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JUNE 24
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1966 JUN 24 AM 11 33

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REF: A. DEPTEL 4005 B. 5722

1. MORNING JUNE 24 SOUTHERN BUDDHIST LAY LEADER MAI THO TRUYEN TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE NOT RPT NOT INVITED TO TAKE PART IN CIVILIAN-MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL DESPITE FACT HIS NAME APPEARED ON LIST PUBLISHED IN LOCAL PRESS. HE SAID FIRST HE HEARD OF MATTER WAS WHEN FRIEND CALLED HIS ATTENTION TO PRESS REPORT. LATER HE HEARD SAME REPORT ON SAIGON RADIO. ASKED IF

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 3000A C O N F I D E N T I A L
HE INTENDED PARTICIPATE IF OFFICIALLY ASKED, HE DID NOT ANSWER DIRECTLY BUT SAID THAT HE HAD TAKEN PART IN BOTH COUNCIL OF NOTABLES AND HIGH NATIONAL COUNCIL, AND BOTH FAILED.

2. TRUYEN COMMENTED ON OCCUPATION OF BUDDHIST INSTITUTE GROUNDS, SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION INSTITUTE CAMPAIGN AGAINST GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLETELY FAILED. HE SAID HE DOES NOT BELIEVE TAM CHAU AND MILITANT MONKS CAN MAKE UP THEIR DIFFERENCES. MILITANTS WILL BE OBLIGED GIVE IN TO GVN, BUT THEY WILL SAY TAM CHAU BETRAYED THEM AND THEY WILL NEVER FORGIVE HIM.

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3. TRUYEN SAID TAM CHAU HAS NO POWER TO ISSUE COMMUNIQUES WITHOUT AGREEMENT OF INSTITUTE COUNCIL. ALTHOUGH HE WAS RIGHT IN RELIGIOUS TERMS TO OPPOSE PLACING ALTARS IN STREETS HE WAS TECHNICALLY WRONG IN NOT GETTING AGREEMENT OF COUNCIL BEFORE ISSUING HIS STATEMENT.

4. ASKED ABOUT LIKELY LONG TERM EFFECTS OF RECENT EVENTS, TRUYEN SAID THAT INSTITUTE AND ITS LEADERS

PAGE THREE RUMJIR 3000A C O N F I D E N T I A L
HAVE LOST FACE WITH PEOPLE AND NO LONGER COMMAND THEIR SUPPORT. HE SAID THIS WAS "SORROWFUL THING FOR BUDDHISM" BUT THAT IT WAS A NECESSARY PURGING. HE SAID HE WOULD TAKE PART IN A REORGANIZED INSTITUTE ONLY IF "ALL CORRUPT AND POLITICAL MONKS" THROWN OUT.

5. COMMENT: TRUYEN WELL INFORMED ON BUDDHIST AFFAIRS BUT HE IS NOT RPT NOT UNBIASED OBERVER. HE LONG IN OPPOSITION PRESENT INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP FOR VARIETY REASONS. WE THINK INSTITUTE LEADERS IN DIFFICULT POSITION BUT THEY CANNOT RPT NOT BE WRITTEN OFF BY ANY MEANS.
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NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA 6/24/66 11:40 AM

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JUNE 24

REF: DEPTEL 4005

1. LAWS ON ELECTION AND ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION HAVE APPEARED IN VIET NAM PRESS AND VERNACULAR PRESS NOW SERIALIZING LAW ON ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. MINISTRY INTERIOR ALSO MAKING COPIES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

2. THIRD SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE NOT RPT NOT IN FORM OF DRAFT LAW. THEY WERE PASSED TO GVN AS SUGGESTIONS OF VERY GENERALIZED NATURE CONCERNING POSSIBLE GVN

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 2899A
ACTION ON SUCH THINGS AS CENSORSHIP AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING ORGANIZATIONS. GVN HAS NOT RPT NOT YET PUBLICILY RESPONDED TO THIS SET RECOMMENDATIONS.

3. NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON CIVILIAN-MILITARY COUNCIL NOW AVAILABLE. GENERAL CHIEU'S OFFICE HAS PROVIDED EMBASSY WITH LIST THOSE CIVILIANS INVITED TO BECOME MEMBERS, BUT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION YET AS TO HOW MAY HAVE ACTUALLY ACCEPTED OR WHEN LIST WILL BE ANNOUNCED. LODGE
BT

NOTE: Advance copy to S/S-O at 12:24 a.m., June 24, 1966

NOTE: Passed White House, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA at 12:24 a.m. June 24, 1966

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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E X D I S

1. I BROUGHT UNGER TO CALL ON KY WHO TOLD US THAT TAM CHAU HAD TOLD HIM LAST NIGHT THAT HE AND HIS GROUP WOULD NOT BOYCOTT THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS.

2. IN RESPONSE TO A COMMENT THAT AMERICANS WERE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN VIET-NAM'S PROGRESS TOWARD DEMOCRACY, KY SAID, WITH EMPHASIS, THAT ELECTIONS WERE "A NECESSITY FOR VIET-NAM," ADDING: "I DON'T EVER WANT TO HURT PRESIDENT JOHNSON. HE HAS TREATED US VERY WELL."

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 3470A S E C R E T

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF HUE, HE CITED A REPORT BY COLONEL LOAN THAT EVEN THE OLD BUDDHIST MONK THICH DON HAO WAS HAPPY THAT LAW AND ORDER HAS BEEN RESTORED. IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY EVIDENT THAT MANY WHO HAD BEEN NOMINALLY LINKED TO THE STRUGGLE COMMITTEE HAD IN FACT BEEN INTIMIDATED.

4. KY SAID HE HAD TOLD TAM CHAU THAT MOST OF THE DEMANDS IN TAM CHAU'S LETTER (EMBTEL 5714) COULD BE MET: THE GOVERNMENT CERTAINLY DID NOT WANT TO HOLD THE PAGODAS; THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REPAIR DAMAGE TO THE PAGODAS; AND, IF NECESSARY, BUILD NEW ONES; THERE WOULD NOT BE REPRISALS AGAINST THE RANK AND FILE; BUT THAT, OF COURSE, SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE IN CONNECTION WITH THE RING-LEADERS. THIS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW AND DUE PROCESS. HE SAID HE HAD ADVISED TAM CHAU TO STAY OUT OF POLITICS AND TO LET HIM, KY, HELP TO REORGANIZE THE BUDDHISTS. KY FELT THAT HE COULD PROVIDE SOME GOOD BUDDHISTS TO DO THIS, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT FURNISH ANY NAMES.

5. HE FELT THAT IT IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE CLEAR THAT ALL GROUPS ARE GOING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION, WHICH

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CONTRASTS WITH THE MANY STORIES WE HEARD SOME WEEKS AGO OF WIDESPREAD BOYCOTTING. KY UNDERSTANDS THAT GENERAL DON WILL BE A CANDIDATE FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY FROM DALAT. IF TRUE, THIS SEEMS TO ME TO BE SIGNIFICANT. IF PEOPLE LIKE

GENERAL DON ARE GOING TO GIVE UP THE TRADITIONAL VIETNAMESE HABIT OF CONSPIRING AND COUP-PLOTTING IN EXCHANGE FOR BECOMING CANDIDATES, AND ABIDING BY THE RESULTS OF ELECTIONS, IT IS CERTAINLY A STEP FORWARD.

6. KY ALSO MADE CLEAR HE WIWY FAVOR CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION CALLING FOR PRESIDENT DIRECTLY ELECTED BY PEOPLE RATHER THAN BY ASSEMBLY.

7. IN A SEPARATE CALL, THIEU SAID THAT THE ELECTIONS WOULD FORCE THE VIETNAMESE TO WORK TOGETHER. TURNING TO ME, THIEU SAID THAT I HAD OFTEN SPOKEN ABOUT THE VIETNAMESE BEING SUCH AN INTELLIGENT PEOPLE. PERHAPS, HE OBSERVED, THEY WERE A LITTLE TOO INTELLIGENT. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN VIETNAMESE HISTORY, THE PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO WORK TOGETHER. THEY APPROACH THE SEPTEMBER ELECTIONS IN A STATE OF MIND NOT REALLY READY AND THEY ARE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED BY IT ALL, BUT THIS IS GOOD PRACTICE FOR THE NEXT ELECTION. IT IS PARTICULARLY GOOD THAT THE SMALL PARTIES ARE GOING TO BE ELIMINATED SINCE TOO MANY SMALL PARTIES TENDS TO DEFEAT DEMOCRACY.

8. THIEU ECHOES KY'S FEELING THAT ELECTIONS WERE A NECESSITY FOR VIET-NAM. HE SAID THAT THE PRESSURE GROUPS REQUIRED ELECTIONS. THE PEOPLE WANT IT, BUT WERE WILLING TO WAIT. THE PRESSURE GROUPS, HOWEVER, ARE VERY IMPATIENT, AND WANT TO PARTICIPATE RIGHT AWAY. THEY ARE VERY POLITICALLY MINDED

AND HAVE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO ENGAGE IN REAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY EITHER UNDER THE FRENCH OR UNDER DIEM. BUT HAPPILY, THEY ARE NOT BLASE ABOUT IT. EVERYTIME WE SET UP A CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY, OR POLITICAL COMMITTEE, THEIU SAID, THE POLITICALLY MINDED PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY ALWAYS WANT TO TAKE PART.

9. THIEU SAID THAT IT WOULD BE NOVEMBER 1967 BEFORE THE NEW GOVERNMENT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION WOULD BE FUNCTIONING. UNDER THE ORIGINAL PLAN, WHICH THIEU AND KY HAD EVOLVED, THE CONSTITUTION WOULD HAVE BEEN DRAFTED BY EXPERTS, AND THEN SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS AS A REFERENDUM QUESTION ON THE BALLOT AT A SPECIAL ELECTION. NOW, IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURE, THEY WERE FOLLOWING THE ALTERNATE METHOD OF ELECTING MEMBERS OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO DRAFT A CONSTITUTION, WHICH

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WOULD BECOME LAW WITHOUT A REFERENDUM. AS FAR AS THE TIME FACTOR WAS CONCERNED, IT WOULD MAKE NO DIFFERENCE. IT WILL TAKE SIX MONTHS BEFORE A CONSTITUTION CAN ACTUALLY BE PROMULGATED, WHICH MEANS THAT THE NEW CONSTITUTION CANNOT BE PROMULGATED UNTIL FEBRUARY, AND AFTER THAT, IT WILL TAKE SO MUCH TIME TO GET READY FOR ELECTIONS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT CANNOT POSSIBLY TAKE OFFICE BEFORE NOVEMBER.

10. THEIR CURRENT PROBLEM, THIEU SAID, IS TO ORIENT AND GUIDE THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WITHOUT LOOKING AS THOUGH THEY WERE DOING SO. THIEU THOUGHT THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUENT

ASSEMBLY WOULD NOT BE HARD TO MANAGE. HE SAID THEY WOULD BE ALMOST THE SAME PEOPLE AS THOSE WHO MET HERE FOR THE NATIONAL POLITICAL CONGRESS. COMMENT: I THOUGHT THESE WERE GOOD SOLID MEN WITH A PRACTICAL AND PATRIOTIC OUTLOOK. END COMMENT.

11. THIEU WANTED UNGER TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE VERY MUCH ENCOURAGED BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S DETERMINATION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE WAR. THE VIETNAMESE, BETTER THAN ANY OTHER PEOPLE ON EARTH, KNOW THAT THEY CANNOT WIN WITHOUT THE UNITED STATES. THE "RISE AND FALL OF THE THERMOMETER IN THE UNITED STATES IS THE BIGGEST SINGLE INFLUENCE ON THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE."

12. UNGER POINTED OUT THAT AS FAR AS PRESIDENT JOHNSON WAS CONCERNED, THERE WAS "NO THERMOMETER." HIS DETERMINATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM WERE TOTAL. THIEU SAID HE REALIZED THIS.

13. HE THEN SAID THAT THE COMBINATION OF THE SUCCESSFUL SOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS, OF THE MOVE TOWARDS ELECTIONS, OF THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH, AND OF THE MILITARY SUCCESSES, MUST BE VERY DISCOURAGING FOR THE VIET CONG. THEY HAVE LOST BOTH THEIR MILITARY AND POLITICAL POTENTIAL. THEY ARE NOTICEABLY WEAKER IN SOUTH VIET-NAM. AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, HE ADDED THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM, AND THE WAY THE PACIFICATION/ REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IS BEGINNING TO BE FELT IN THE RURAL AREAS. HE SAID THAT TERRORISM AGAINST VILLAGE OFFICIALS AND AGAINST CIVILIANS WAS DIMINISHING, BUT HE HAD NO PRECISE DATA. LODGE.

NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, 6/29/66

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